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willing, not only to profess, but to practice, the teaching of Jesus and to be actuated by his spirit and principles in all things. "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."

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## RELIGION AND CEREMONY

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Religion has always been associated with ceremony. It is through a study of the ceremonies of a people that we are informed concerning many of their religious beliefs. The *menorah* was an integral part of the temple service of the Hebrews; the cross has figured prominently in the service of the Catholic church; the crescent has been the revered symbol of the religion of the Turks. As closely connected, however, as are religion and ceremony they are essentially different and distinct one from the other. While ceremonies come and go, are substituted for others, and change form in their endless flux, religion always remains the same.

What is religion? Religion is an impulse imbedded in the heart of man which compels him to strive upward toward perfection. It is a yearning of the soul in man to transcend its own narrow limits and to soar to the heights of supreme excellence, where it may become identified with the noble, the lofty, the divine.

Every impulse seeks to express itself in action. Religion like the rest of man's impulses must express itself in some act, in some form, in some cere-

mony. Ceremony is the garb but not the essence of religion. It is an external garment which clothes, adorns, makes visible and palpable the unseen spirit, the inner feeling, religion. Religion, so lofty an ideal, must be kept fresh, clean, and pure. But ceremony, the garb of religion, becomes dirtied and sullied with the dust of ages and threatens to smother and bury that noble ideal which it was intended to beautify, and to adorn. If religion is to be kept unfaded its garments must be immaculate; and if these lose their saintly whiteness and their charm-bestowing powers they must be discarded, for fortunately, or unfortunately, people are in the habit of judging things by externals. Seeing the robe of religion soiled and sullied they are apt to lose their regard for religion itself.

Too much caution cannot be exercised when religion is made to take off its old mantle and don the new. Religion must never be violently stripped of its former vestments, nor should the latter be contemptuously flung aside as one would discard old rubbish. That which was once closely bound up with the sacred light of religion has itself become permeated with a holy glow that is

saintly, and worthy of respect. When the need draws nigh for religion to assume more living ceremonies, the old ones must be cautiously, tactfully, and gradually removed, and gently laid aside. The noble feelings which they once called forth must now be respected and delicately treated. But when must a particular ceremony be considered a cloak which religion has outworn and as such give way to another?

First we must be clear as to the purpose and function of ceremony. Ceremony is the handmaid, the servant of religion. It is but a means to an end. Ceremony is designed to fan into a blaze the slumbering spark of religious fire within the bosom of man. Its efficacy lies in the response that it is able to produce either in the feelings of a multitude or in those of but a single individual. It is not a rite to be observed for its own sake, nor for the occult and mysterious power that is inherent in it; for none of that exists. The ceremony in itself is of no value. It is neither good nor bad, neither holy nor profane, neither prosaic nor religious; but is so judged only with regard to the influence that it exerts upon the human heart.

The moment its stimulating power declines, when it fails to light up man's heart with a religious glow and stir him to acts of nobility and worth, when it becomes monotonous, sordid, formal, rigid, cold, then it is time to lay it aside. Religion is a vital force and must not be allowed to stagnate due to the congealed rigidity of a lifeless ceremony. Man is so constituted that a thing which at one time filled him with awe would if unchanged and constantly before his

eyes leave him indifferent and cold. This fact universally experienced is most often sadly disregarded. The ceremonies of religion effective in one age would be without religious vitality in another. The *tzitzit* on the arm and forehead of the ghetto Jew would make him feel a oneness with the Divine, but when worn by a liberal Jew of the twentieth century they would leave him unaffected and without emotion. When primitive man sacrificed his child to the god that he worshiped, he was filled with religious ecstasy; it was the highest form of self-surrender that he was capable of. Such a sacrifice offered today would fill us with horror.

It is the end and aim of religion's institutions to bring about an attitude in man which would make him strive to attain the noblest in all fields of endeavor. The spheres of business, labor, the arts, the crafts, the sciences, and all the minutiae of everyday life must reveal man's religious attitude. But how is this state of mind in man to be brought about?

It is to help to achieve that end that ceremony lays its claim. Ceremony may be made a vital part of religion. It should be the outward expression of the religious feeling within. There hardly can be any religion without ceremony. Every people, no matter how primitive or how advanced, must have its ceremonies. Social life necessitates their existence. They are the only means whereby a people can express its feelings. The removal of the hat gives the sign of respect. A bow is the symbol of courtesy. The raising of the flag stirs within the heart the feeling of patriotism.

Religion above all must have its

ceremonies to bring into the foreground the better emotions in man. A handshake sincerely given may change an entire life-career. It may serve as a check upon the downward course of a man's existence. A sympathetic sparkle in the eye or a gentle nod of encouragement may stimulate one to the elevation of one's self. A humble bow of the head, done in response to a sincere longing within to set one's self in harmony with the profound mystery that surrounds us all, may more than all else attune the soul of man to work in unison with right. The pleading strains of music may melt the hardness of one's heart. The glowing colors of a painting may make one's spirit soar aloft.

The ideal ceremony would be that which would succeed in making man feel, not as an isolated, selfish, lonely creature in a desert of emptiness, but as a being which is a part of the Great Unknown that fills all that is. A ceremony that would make man fuse in sympathy and feel a oneness with the sublime All, which would bring him into communion with God—that ceremony is the goal to which the institutions of religion are to strive.

Such a ceremony, however, could not be constant but must ever change as man changes. Just what ceremonies will accomplish this end must depend wholly upon our knowledge of man's instincts and emotions as well as our conception of the way in which they may be called forth. It is with these facts that psychology deals. The church and the synagogue in order to stimulate in man the desire for religiosity and higher achievement must make the science of the mind their friend and ally.

Psychology, or the study of consciousness, deals with the effects of things upon man's mind. It seeks to determine the quality of the changes that certain things under given circumstances have wrought upon the mind of man. Psychology and the institutions of religion have therefore a great problem in common.

The church and the synagogue have heretofore not officially recognized the possibilities that the application of the results of psychological research would afford of increasing their attractive powers. It is a new step that religion is now forced to take, urged on by its desire to fill the constantly increasing number of empty pews. Empty pews do not necessarily show irreligious people but rather the failure of religion's institutions to provide the means whereby to stimulate in people their religious feelings. Religion must now look to the science which deals with the nature of the people's mind, in order to recharge its energies of attraction and stimulation.

To those who would deny the partnership of psychology and religion let it be said that it would be unwise to refuse to accept the hand of help in time of trouble. This is an age of mutual helpfulness in which no one is sufficient unto himself. It is an age of give and take; we live in the great world of exchange. Co-operation is the noble watchword of the times. We no longer regard religion as opposed to any of the truth-seeking processes in the world. We humbly acknowledge that we are all seeking in our limited spheres to unravel the great mystery that confronts us in a million and one different ways of our ever-struggling lives.

Let it no longer be the cry of religious leaders when they behold the growing army of irreligionists: "They possess not that noble sense which is a part of us. They are God-forsaken. They are the accursed. We are the elect. We belong to the chosen people. They are the outcasts of the Almighty."

If religion has value for some it has value for all. If it be of worth at all everyone must share in it. For religious leaders to declare that they and their flocks alone are privileged to enjoy the fruit and be happy beneath the protecting wings of religion is to maintain that religion favors aristocracy. Religion, if it be of the true sort, must shelter all of humankind, whether it be rich or poor, old or young, strong or weak. It must be a religion of democracy.

It must never be understood that the application of the mechanics obtained through the aid of psychological research for the purpose of arousing religious sentiment will suffice for the service of worship and religious devotion. Hollow indeed would such a worship be if it be worship at all. It is the spirit of reverence and awe that must permeate the

institutions of religion. Psychology, in giving us an insight into man's mind and its workings, would but help us to facilitate the expression of man's noblest emotions. It would but serve as a means to the desired end, to stimulate religious feeling for the purpose of noble living.

The wheels of progress are moving slowly and heavily. In a similar manner does religion journey. Most often when everything is way on the march it is religion that ponderously lags behind. The time has come to lubricate the wheels to make its movements more easy. Viewed in this light there are wonderful opportunities for the active and energetic ministers of religion. Religion must have as its aim to saturate all mankind with religious fervor and enthusiasm. It can do a great deal to accomplish this end through ceremony—ceremony that ennobles, that stirs, that touches the heart. Religion is a universal fire by which every human being can warm. No one is to be denied the blessing of its soothing and healing rays. The great responsibility upon the shoulders of the ministers of religion is to furnish the means.